

WE CLAIM:

1. A system for producing a photographic identification card comprising:
 - a camera for taking a photograph of a user, the photograph defining a user's photograph;
 - a printer;
 - identification card media, the identification card media including at least one predefined identification card boundary; and
 - computer readable media containing computer instructions capable of causing a programmable computer operatively connected to the camera, the printer, and to a user interface, to:
 - prompt the user to input the user's name at the user interface;
 - cause the camera to take the user's photograph;
 - cause the printer to print identification card indicia including at least the user's name and photograph onto the identification card media within the predefined identification card boundary; and
 - store to non-volatile memory the user's name and photograph, the user's name and photograph being associated together within the memory.
2. The system of claim 1 further comprising:
 - written instructions provided to the user for manipulating the identification card media with the identification card indicia printed thereon to produce the photographic identification card.

3. The system of claim 2 wherein the written instructions are instructions printed on paper.

4. The system of claim 2 wherein the written instructions are instructions presented to the user on a display screen.

5. The system of claim 1 wherein the user inputs the user's name at the user interface by swiping a driver's license through a magnetic card reader.

6. The system of claim 1 wherein the user inputs the user's name at the user interface by selecting a name from a pick list.

7. The system of claim 1 wherein the user inputs the user's name at the user interface by spelling his name on either a keyboard or a touchscreen keypad.

8. The system of claim 1 wherein the camera is a webcam.

9. The system of claim 1 wherein the computer instructions are further capable of causing the programmable computer to display on a display screen for the user a preview of the identification card indicia in an arrangement that is substantially identical to an arrangement on which it will be printed onto the identification card media, thereby allowing the user to see a preview of the photographic identification card.

10. The system of claim 9 wherein the preview is updated after the user enters each letter of the user's name.

11. The system of claim 1 wherein the camera and the printer are housed within a self-serve kiosk.

12. The system of claim 1 wherein the printer is a desktop printer.

13. The system of claim 12 wherein the desktop printer is a color inkjet printer or a color laser printer.

14. The system of claim 1 further comprising:

a log creation module, the log creation module capable of retrieving names and photographs of a plurality of users for whom photographic identification cards have been created, and generating reports pertaining thereto.

15. The system of claim 1 wherein:

the system retains data pertaining to the user after a first visit by the user;

upon a second visit, the user can recall the retained data for use in creating a second identification card such that the user can avoid certain information entry steps that were required of the user upon the user's first visit.

16. The system of claim 15 wherein the system prompts the user upon a first visit to enter an email address and the system stores the retained data in association with the email address; and

upon a second and subsequent visit by the user the user can enter the email address whereupon the system will recall the retained data and use the retained data in printing a second identification badge.

17. The system of claim 1 further comprising a bar code reader, and wherein the identification card indicia printed on the identification card indicia includes a bar code which can be read by the bar code reader.

18. The system of claim 1 wherein the identification card indicia printed onto the identification card includes additional information entered by the user.

19. The system of claim 1 wherein the identification card indicia printed onto the identification card includes information previously entered by the user over an Internet connection.

20. The system of claim 1 wherein the identification card indicia printed onto the identification card includes information previously entered via interaction with an electronic messaging and calendaring system.

21. The system of claim 1 wherein the identification card indicia printed onto the identification card includes additional information entered by someone other than the user.

22. The system of claim 1 wherein the identification card boundary comprises a boundary of the identification card media, the identification card media being less than a full size 8-1/2 x 11 inch sheet and less than an A4 size sheet.

23. The system of claim 1 wherein the identification card boundary comprises at least one die cut within the identification card media.

24. The system of claim 1 wherein the identification card media comprises a printable facestock releasable adhered to a liner, the facestock having at least one die cut and one weakened line therein, such that the media may be printed upon by a single pass through the printer, and the facestock thereafter peeled away from the liner and folded along the weakened line to form a two-sided identification badge.

25. The system of claim 1 wherein the identification card media comprises a paper label sheet.

26. The system of claim 1 wherein the computer instructions include a system administrator card layout function that allows a system administrator to determine a selection and an arrangement of the identification card indicia that will be printed onto the identification card.

27. The system of claim 1 wherein the computer instructions include a system administrator field function that allows a system administrator to determine a selection and number of data fields which must be completed by a user before an identification card will be printed for the user.

28. The system of claim 1 wherein the computer instructions include a photo-retake function that allows a visitor to preview an image of a first photograph taken of him by the camera, and allows the visitor to initiate the taking of a second photograph for printing onto the identification card instead of the first photograph.

29. The system of claim 1 further comprising a signature capture device operatively connected to the computer, and wherein the user is prompted to sign at the signature capture device thereby creating a captured signature, the captured signature being stored in memory in association with the user's name and photograph.

30. The system of claim 29 wherein the identification card indicia printed onto the identification card further includes the captured signature of the user.

31. The system of claim 1 further comprising:

a card scanning device for scanning identification cards produced by the system.

32. The system of claim 31 wherein the card scanning device is a card scanning device for logging a user out when the user exits the facility.

33. The system of claim 32 wherein the computer instructions are further capable of causing the computer to create a list of all users currently within a facility in accordance with users for whom identification cards have been printed and users who have been logged out.

34. The system of claim 33 wherein the list is sent electronically to an emergency governmental entity.

35. A system for controlling access to a facility when a user visits the facility thereby defining a user's visit, the system comprising:

an image capture device;

a printer;

a user interface; and

a computer operatively connected to the image capture device, the printer, and the user interface, wherein the computer performs the steps of:

prompting the user to identify himself;

capturing an image of the person via the image capture device;

creating a record of the user's visit to the facility; and

printing an identification card for the user via the printer, the identification card containing at least the captured image.

36. The system of claim 35 wherein the image capturing and printing steps are performed at a lobby to the facility.

37. The system of claim 35 wherein the image capture device is a scanner.

38. The system of claim 35 wherein the image capture device is a camera.

39. The system of claim 35 wherein the user identifies himself via biometrics.

40. The system of claim 35 wherein the user identifies himself via a radio frequency identification device.

41. The system of claim 35 wherein the user identifies himself by entering a name.

42. The system of claim 35 wherein the user identifies himself by providing a card having a magnetic stripe with identifying information encoded thereon.

43. A method of producing an identification badge for an entrant to a facility, comprising:

providing to the entrant equipment and badge media using which the visitor can produce for himself a photographic identification badge which includes both a photographic image of the visitor and the visitor's name printed upon the badge media; and

storing within a computer memory the photographic image of the visitor and the visitor's name.

44. The method of claim 43 wherein the equipment:

prompts the entrant to provide information regarding himself, the information including the entrant's name; and

prompts the entrant to pose for the photographic image to be taken.

45. The method of claim 43 further comprising:

generating a message regarding availability of badge media in accordance with a beginning badge media count and a number of times which the equipment has been used to create badges.

46. The method of claim 45 wherein the message is a refill reminder message.

47. The method of claim 43 further comprising:

verifying that the entrant is authorized to enter the facility by electronically comparing information provided by the user against a list of authorized entrants.

48. The method of claim 47 wherein the list of authorized entrants is maintained at a location remote from the equipment.

49. The system of claim 43 further comprising the step of:

storing within the computer memory information corresponding to a time that the user created the identification badge or entered the facility, and corresponding to a time that the user exited the facility.

50. The system of claim 49 further comprising using a bar code reader to scan the identification badge when the visitor exits the facility, and storing to memory an associated visitor exit time.

51. The system of claim 50 wherein the visitor uses the bar code reader to scan his own identification badge when he exits the facility.

52. A method of controlling access to a secure facility comprising:

- (a) providing at an entrance to a facility a camera, a user interface, and a printer;
- (b) prompting a visitor to the facility to input his name to the user interface;
- (c) taking a photograph of the visitor via the camera;

(d) printing via the printer an identification card for the visitor, the identification card including at least the visitor's name and photograph; and

(e) allowing the visitor to access the facility using the identification card;

wherein steps (b), (c), and (d) are performed without security personnel physically present at the facility entrance.

53. The system of claim 52 further comprising the step of:

(f) providing a person at a location remote from the facility entrance, the remote person performing step (e) based upon successful completion of steps (c) and (d).

54. A method of controlling access to a secure facility comprising:

providing at a first facility entrance first equipment using which a first visitor can make a first photographic identification card for himself, the first equipment including a first computer interface;

providing at a second facility entrance second equipment using which a second visitor can make a second photographic identification card for himself, the second equipment including a second computer interface;

providing an attendant at an attendant location that is remote from the facility entrances, the attendant capable of communicating electronically with visitors to the facility entrances to provide assistance to visitors at a plurality of separate facility entrances in making the identification cards for themselves.

55. The method of claim 54 wherein the identification cards are photographic identification cards.

56. The method of claim 54 wherein the assistance comprises audible assistance using two-way voice communication.

57. The method of claim 56 wherein the first and second computer interfaces are operatively connected to at least one computer, the method further comprising:

providing to the attendant an attendant terminal operatively connected to the at least one computer; and wherein:

the assistance further comprises the remote attendant sending commands to the at least one computer thereby rendering it unnecessary for the first visitor to enter data that would otherwise be entered by the first visitor using the first computer interface in making an identification card for himself.

58. A method of providing access to a facility comprising:

providing to a person equipment and identification card media for making a photographic identification card for himself, the photographic identification card including a photographic image and a name of the person;

recording at a remote location an electronic record of the identification card including at least the person's name and a date on which the identification card was created.

59. The method of claim 58 wherein the electronic record includes a digital photograph of the person and the person's name.

60. The method of claim 59 wherein:

the equipment includes a computer running a web browser program;

the computer is operatively connected through the browser program to a web server;
and

the web server creates the electronic record of the identification card.

61. A computer readable media containing an executable, self contained computer program that can be launched within a context of a parent computer program for use in creating an identification card, the self-contained program comprising:

fields, user screen display elements, and prompts for soliciting data entry from a user through the parent computer program;

logic for determining which of the prompts to present to the user based upon previous responses by the user to previous prompts;

formatting instructions for printing data obtained from the user in response to the prompts within a predefined boundary onto identification card media to create an identification card.

62. The computer readable media of claim 61 wherein the self-contained program further comprising:

database mapping instructions for storing the data received from the user for later retrieval.

63. The computer readable media of claim 61 wherein the data obtained from the user includes a digital photograph of the user obtained using an image capture device.

64. The computer readable media of claim 61 wherein the self-contained program further comprises logic for validating at least some of the data obtained from the user.

65. A system for producing identification cards and a centralized log of visitors to a facility comprising:

a web server;

a plurality of visitor identification card making stations, the stations being in operative communication with the central web server;

wherein each station collects data from persons, prints respective identification cards for users in accordance with the collected data, and sends the collected data to the web server.

66. The system of claim 65 wherein the identification card making stations each include a camera, the data collected includes names of visitors and captured photographic images of users, the identification cards each include a name of a user and a captured photographic image of the user, and the data sent to the web server includes names and captured photographic images of the users.

67. A method for creating a display card comprising the steps of:
- presenting at least one user with at least one display card creating option to be selected by the at least one user;
 - receiving the at least one display card creating option selected by the at least one user;
 - presenting at least one information input field for input onto a display card;
 - enabling the at least one user to input user information into the at least one information input field;
 - receiving the user information input by the at least one user; and
 - creating a display card based on the user information.
68. The method of claim 67, further comprising the step of:
- presenting a preview of the display card.
69. The method of claim 68, wherein the step of presenting a preview of the display card is done in real-time.
70. The method of claim 67, further comprising the step of:
- presenting the at least one user with a plurality of displays based on at least one of a static template and a dynamic template.
71. The method of claim 67, further comprising the step of:
- providing at least one unique identifier on the display card.
72. The method of claim 71, wherein the at least one unique identifier comprises an identification number.
73. The method of claim 71, wherein the at least one unique identifier comprises a barcode.

74. The method of claim 73, further comprising the step of:
scanning the barcode.
75. The method of claim 67, further comprising the step of:
printing the display card.
76. The method of claim 75, wherein the step of printing prints the identification card on one of a plurality of print media, wherein the print media comprises labels, clean edge, spot metallic, validity indicator, self-laminating, dry laminate, erasable, lenticular sleeve, holographic, low-power portable screen, and two-sided.
77. The method of claim 67, further comprising the step of:
enabling the at least one user to manually input display card information.
78. The method of claim 77, further comprising the step of:
requesting that the at least one user input the unique identification number printed on the display card.
79. The method of claim 67, further comprising the step of:
presenting an image of the at least one user to the at least one user; and
taking a photograph of the at least one user based on the image.
80. The method of claim 79, further comprising the step of:
providing a predetermined background to the photograph based on the user type selected.
81. The method of claim 80, wherein the predetermined background comprises at least one of a color, pattern, and design.
82. The method of claim 67, further comprising the step of:
enabling the at least one user to import a photograph.

83. The method of claim 67, further comprising the step of:
enabling the at least one user to reject or accept the photograph.
84. The method of claim 67, further comprising the step of:
monitoring ingress and egress of the at least one user to a location using the display card.
85. The method of claim 84, further comprising the step of:
maintaining a log of user activity regarding ingress and egress of the at least one user of the location.
86. The method of claim 85, wherein the user activity comprises at least one of a date, time, and location of the at least one user's entering the location.
87. The method of claim 67, further comprising the step of:
enabling the at least one user to specify a time period that indicates when the display card is valid.
88. The method of claim 67, further comprising the step of:
enabling the at least one user to select a user type.
89. The method of claim 88, wherein the user type comprises a predefined plurality of visitor types that may be modified by a system administrator.
90. The method of claim 67, further comprising the step of:
enabling the at least one user to return to a previous presentation.
91. The method of claim 67, wherein the step of enabling an image of the at least one user to be presented to the at least one user presents the image in real-time.

92. The method of claim 67, further comprising the step of:
notifying the at least one user regarding when the photograph is going to be taken.
93. The method of claim 92, wherein the step of notifying comprises a countdown of time to when the photograph is going to be taken.
94. The method of claim 92, wherein the step of notifying comprises an audible signal.
95. The method of claim 67, further comprising the step of:
enabling pre-registration of the at least one user.
96. The method of claim 67, further comprising the step of:
enabling pre-check-in of the at least one user.
97. The method of claim 96, further comprising the step of:
notifying a meeting organizer that the at least one user has pre-checked-in.
98. The method of claim 67, further comprising the step of:
updating at least one of a contacts, address book, and mailing list based on information input by the at least one user.
99. The method of claim 67, further comprising the step of:
enabling a group check-in.
100. The method of claim 99, further comprising the step of:
enabling batch printing of the display card.
101. The method of claim 67, further comprising the step of:
communicating the user information to a server using hypertext transfer protocol over transmission control protocol/Internet protocol.

102. The method of claim 67, further comprising the step of:

reading a magnetic stripe to obtain user information.

103. A system for creating a display card comprising:

an option presenting module that presents to at least one user at least one display card creating option to be selected by the at least one user;

an option receiving module that receives the at least one display card creating option selected by the at least one user;

an input field presenting module that presents at least one information input field for input onto a display card;

an input enabling module that enables the at least one user to input user information into the at least one information input field;

a user information receiving module that receives the user information input by the at least one user; and

a display card creating module that creates a display card based on the user information.

104. The system of claim 103, further comprising a preview presenting module that presents a preview of the display card.

105. The system of claim 104, wherein the preview presenting module presents a preview of the display card is done in real-time.

106. The system of claim 103, further comprising a display presenting module that presents at least one display to the at least one user based on at least one of a static template and a dynamic template.

107. The system of claim 103, further comprising a unique identifier providing module that provides at least one unique identifier on the display card.

108. The system of claim 107, wherein the at least one unique identifier comprises an identification number.

109. The system of claim 107, wherein the at least one unique identifier comprises a barcode.

110. The system of claim 109, further comprising a scanning module that scans at least one of the barcode, a photograph, and a business card.

111. The system of claim 103, further comprising a printing module that prints the display card.

112. The system of claim 103, further comprising a manual input enabling module that enables the at least one user to manually input display card information.

113. The system of claim 112, further comprising a unique identification number requesting module that requests that the at least one user input the unique identification number printed on the display card.

114. The system of claim 103, further comprising an image presenting module that presents the at least one user with an image of the at least one user and a photographing module that photographs the at least one user based on the image.

115. The system of claim 114, wherein the image presenting module presents the image of the at least one user in real-time.

116. The system of claim 114, further comprising a photograph accepting module that enables the at least one user to reject or accept the photograph.

117. The system of claim 114, further comprising a background providing module that provides a predetermined background to the photograph based on the user type selected.

118. The system of claim 117, wherein the predetermined background comprises at least one of a color, pattern, and design.

119. The system of claim 114, further comprising a notifying module that notifies the at least one user regarding when the photograph is going to be taken.

120. The system of claim 119, wherein the notifying module notifies the at least one user with an audible signal.

121. The system of claim 114, further comprising a counting module that counts down a time to when the photograph is going to be taken.

122. The system of claim 103, further comprising a pre-registering module that enables pre-registration of the at least one user.

123. The system of claim 103, further comprising a pre-check-in module that enables pre-check-in of the at least one user.

124. The system of claim 123, further comprising a notifying module that notifies a meeting participant that the at least one user has pre-checked-in.

125. The system of claim 103, further comprising an updating module that updates at least one of a contacts, address book, and mailing list based on information input by the at least one user.

126. The system of claim 103, further comprising a group check-in module that enables a group check-in.

127. The system of claim 126, further comprising a batch printing module that enables batch printing of the display card.

128. The system of claim 103, further comprising a communicating module that communicates the user information to a server using hypertext transfer protocol over transmission control protocol/Internet protocol.

129. The system of claim 103, further comprising a photograph importing module that enables the at least one user to import a photograph.

130. The system of claim 103, further comprising a maintaining module that maintains a log of user activity regarding ingress and egress of the at least one user of the location.

131. The system of claim 130, wherein the user activity comprises at least one of a date, time, and location of the at least one user's entering the location.

132. The system of claim 103, further comprising a time period specifying module that enables the at least one user to specify a time period that indicates when the display card is valid.

133. The system of claim 103, further comprising a user type selecting module that enables the at least one user to select a user type.

134. The system of claim 103, wherein the user type comprises at least one visitor type.

135. The system of claim 103, further comprising a returning module that enables the at least one user to return to a previous presentation.

136. A system for creating a display card comprising:

display card creating means for enabling a user to create a display card;

inputting means for enabling the user to input user information;

photographing means for taking a photograph of the user; and

communicating means for communicating the user information and the photograph used to create the display card to a server using hypertext transfer protocol over transmission control protocol/Internet protocol.